

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND STATE, THE JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate, having received H.R. 2267, the House companion bill to S. 1022, will now proceed to its immediate consideration. All after the enacting clause is stricken, the text of S. 1022, as amended, is inserted. The House bill is read a third time and passed. The Senate insists on its amendment and requests a conference with the House.

The bill (H.R. 2267), as amended, was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROBERTS) appointed Mr. GREGG, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. HOLLINGS, Mr. BYRD, Mr. INOUE, Mr. BUMPERS, Mr. LAUTENBERG, and Ms. MIKULSKI conferees on the part of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, S. 1022 is indefinitely postponed.

Who seeks time?

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GREGG). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, I want to advise the floor leaders it is my intention to request approximately 12 minutes as in morning business to discuss another issue. I don't want to interrupt their flow on the floor, but it looks like this may be an appropriate time to do so.

Mr. FAIRCLOTH. We have no objection whatsoever.

Mr. BRYAN. I ask unanimous consent I might speak as in morning business for a period up to 12 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RADIATION EFFECTS

Mr. BRYAN. Mr. President, earlier today the Labor Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee held a hearing on a report prepared by the National Cancer Institute regarding the health effects of fallout from atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons in the 1950's and 1960's.

Today, 35 years after the last atmospheric test, we are just beginning to get a clear picture of the effects of the radioactive fallout from these tests.

While we should obviously continue to do everything we can to help the victims of these tests, I hope we can also learn something from our mistakes in the past.

This August, the National Cancer Institute released the results of its nationwide study of radioactive fallout from atmospheric nuclear tests conducted at the Nevada Test Site in the 1950's and 1960's.

In 1982, Congress directed the Department of Health and Human Services to develop methods to estimate radioactive iodine-131 exposure, to assess thyroid I-131 doses, and to assess risks for thyroid cancer from the exposures.

Ninety atmospheric tests were conducted at the test site mainly in the years 1952, 1953, 1955, and 1957.

All 48 contiguous States received some degree of exposure to radioactive iodine-131 fallout from these atmospheric nuclear bomb tests.

Everyone in those States was exposed.

Let me repeat that—everyone was exposed.

People living hundreds of miles to the north and east of the Nevada Test Site in Montana, Idaho, Utah, South Dakota, and Colorado were exposed.

Within these 5 States, 25 counties had particularly high fall-out exposure ranging from 12.0 to 9.0 rads.

A "rad" is a radiation absorbed dose, which is the amount of radiation absorbed by the tissues in the body.

The tragic conclusion of this study is that children, who lived in these high exposure areas, and who were aged between 3 months and 5 years at the time of the tests were at the greatest risk for iodine-131 exposure.

Since children's thyroids are so small, their exposure was disproportionately higher than adults.

Children who drank contaminated milk—particularly from cows maintained for family use—and which ate pasture vegetation, have an even greater exposure.

The children in this age group exceeded the average per capita thyroid dose by a factor of about 3.7 following the tests because of their greater milk consumption and their smaller thyroids.

After each of the 90 tests, people living in these States were exposed to varying levels of iodine-131—for about 2 months following each test.

This means the air, milk, and other dairy products, eggs and leafy vegetables were all contaminated, and that contamination lingered for a significant period of time after each test.

The National Cancer Institute has concluded from the limited data available on people who were exposed, as children, to iodine-131 from the nuclear tests' fallout that this exposure is linked to thyroid cancer.

NCI estimates between 10,000 to 75,000 people who were exposed as children may develop fallout-associated thyroid cancer during their lifetime.

Nearly all were under 15 years of age at the time of exposure, and 75 percent were under 5 years of age.

NCI is currently working with scientists in Belarus and Ukraine to study thyroid cancer following the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986.

Thousands of children exposed to the accident's fallout received radiation doses to their thyroids.

These doses ranged from comparatively small to 10 times higher than U.S. residents received from the Nevada tests in the 1950's and 1960's.

There was a clear increase in thyroid cancer from the Chernobyl accident in this population.

The wide range of radioactive fallout exposures to such a large number of people that resulted in an increase in thyroid cancer will be most helpful in assessing the impact of the Nevada tests on those exposed.

Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention researchers are studying the health effects of radioactive iodine released from the Hanford, WA nuclear weapons plant in the 1940's and 1950's.

The Hanford study results are to be available in 1998.

The Institute of Medicine [IOM] is currently also working with the Department of Health and Human Services to review the data from the National Cancer Institute's study to assess the risk to the exposed individuals.

The IOM will also develop recommendations for physicians regarding how to treat people who might be at risk of disease because of their I-131 exposure.

These recommendations should be available within 6 to 9 months.

What child growing up in the 1950's and early 1960's was not encouraged to drink as much milk as possible to build strong and healthy bodies? In the 1950's and 1960's, health experts advocated each youngster should consume four glasses of milk each day. No one in those years expected young children living hundreds of miles to the north and east of the Nevada Test Site drinking their milk were going to face a possible increase in thyroid cancer incidence.

But that is the consequence being faced by those exposed.

In addition, it is becoming increasingly clear that some of the scientists and engineers associated with atmospheric testing knew, or at least suspected, that there were health and safety consequences to the fallout.

Some of the Government personnel working on the testing program actually sent their families away from the area during and immediately after tests to protect them from the fallout.

A story reported yesterday in the New York Times is even worse, the Atomic Energy Commission apparently warned the Eastman Kodak Co. and other film companies of planned tests, so that the film companies could take steps to protect their film stocks from being damaged.

Somehow, the AEC decided it was more important to protect photographic film, than the health and safety of tens of thousands of citizens who were exposed and who, today, we know will suffer thyroid and other genetic